

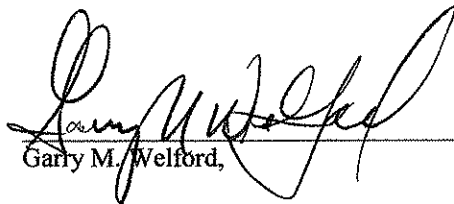
April 9, 2008

My name is Garry Welford; I am currently serving as George County Sheriff. Prior to becoming Sheriff, I was a Conservation Officer for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. During my 30 years as a Conservation Officer, I spent countless hours patrolling on the Pascagoula River. I know the importance of the river system to the people of George, Jackson and Greene Counties. I was a Conservation Officer when the State of Mississippi, spent millions of dollars to purchase what is now known as the Pascagoula River Wildlife Management Area, comprising some 37,000 acres along and including the river. The goal of the purchase was to preserve the hardwood bottomlands and ecosystem of the River, for present and future generations to have and enjoy. Today the Pascagoula River remains the largest, natural free-flowing river in North America.

I personally, nor do I believe anyone in George County has any objections to the Richton Salt Dome Project. My objection is building another pumping station on the river and pumping another 50 million gallons of water from the river, in addition to what is currently being pumped from the river in Jackson County. During my time as a Conservation Officer, I have been witness to the river becoming wider and shallower and harder to travel on, even a small boat and outboard motor. Some of the reasons for this I believe is a natural process, and some of the reason can attributed to past land management practices, mainly clear-cutting along the river and tributaries of the river. Most is damage is irreversible, however I believe people have changed their practices and become more protective of the river.

Today there are already several industries in Jackson pumping water from the river at Cumbeest Bluff. I know for sure that water has had to be released from reservoirs on tributaries of the river north of here, to sustain the pumping requirements. Another pumping station taking another 50 million gallons per day will only compound those problems. The residents of George County do not have a lot of recreational opportunities available to them here locally. This river system is where we fish, camp out with our kids, enjoy water sports and hunt the wildlife that the river system supports. People who buy their boats and outboard motors and fishing, hunting and camping supplies here support several local businesses.

I respectfully request that the Department of Energy and U.S. Government seek out an alternative source for the water needed to flush out the Richton Salt Dome Project, and please do not take the water from the Pascagoula River. Thank You,



Garry M. Welford,